

LOCAL RADIO HAS BECOME A CRITICAL ISSUE AS COMMERCIAL FULL POWER STATIONS EXIST TO PROFIT FROM SELLING ADVERTISING AND HAVE NO COMMITMENT TO MEETING LOCAL NEEDS. THE FCC HAS FAILED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY LETTING THIS SITUATION HAPPEN. LPFM AND OTHER LOCAL OUTLETS ARE CRITICAL TO REDRESSING THE BALANCE. CITIZENS ARE INCREASINGLY VOICELESS WHEN COMMERCIAL NEEDS ARE ALLOWED TO TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS.

The FCC should make every effort to protect low power FM (LPFM) and the community-oriented content it provides. Unlike the consolidated commercial radio landscape, LPFM stations provide quality local programming and enhance the diversity of local voices available to their communities.

Full power stations should not be allowed to cut into the coverage area of LPFM stations and knock them off the air. The FCC should adopt a policy that denies a full power station's modification application if granting the application would reduce the coverage area available to LPFM stations.

LPFM stations also should be afforded higher priority than translators. Translators only repeat programming, sometimes from hundreds of miles away. Every new translator takes the place of a potential LPFM station that would provide original local programming. The FCC should give locally controlled and operated LPFM station applications precedence over translator applications.

The FCC should consider the circumstances under which low power stations operate when determining the rules for their licensing. For LPFM service to be more accessible to community groups, the FCC should modify its rules so that typical changes on a non-profit board would be permissible under FCC rules. Similarly, the FCC should allow low power stations a greater amount of time to construct stations and to shift ownership.

The FCC has the responsibility to protect the service of low power radio and nurture its growth. Congress is considering legislation to expand the service by removing the restrictions on the third-adjacent channel, which could allow LPFM to expand into larger communities. The FCC should take every opportunity to tell Congress that the technological landscape is ready for this change.